

July 15, 2024

Honorable J. David Markham
Presiding Judge
Lake County Superior Courts
255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

To the Honorable Judge J. David Markham,

I am writing this letter in accordance with Penal Code Section 933.05 as a response to the June 30th, 2024 Final Report from the Lake County Civil Grand Jury. I want to thank the Court for its role in facilitating this process, and to express my gratitude and appreciation for the Grand Jurors who dedicated many hours to provide this important service to our community. I welcome the opportunity to have oversight and feedback regarding the Sheriff's Office operations. My dedicated staff and I constantly strive to improve the professional services provided by this agency to the people of Lake County.

The Sheriff's Office had multiple interactions with members of the Grand Jury during the previous year, including interviews with members, exchanges of numerous telephone calls and emails, and various interactions with members of the Grand Jury at public events. The commitment of this Grand Jury was evident in their efforts to investigate and report on governmental activities. I appreciate their efforts and commend their service.

In response to the 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report, the Lake County Sheriff's Office respectfully submits the following responses:

Name or Report: Lake County Jail

Recommendation #R-1: "That the Sheriff's Department expand its efforts to obtain female correctional officers." (F-1).

AGREE, has been implemented. The Sheriff's Department has and will continue to expand our efforts to obtain and retain female correctional officers. We have worked closely with Human Resources to advertise and recruit specifically for this position. We have worked closely with the Board of Supervisors to establish a \$20,000 hiring incentive for this position (that is currently

\$10,000 more than for any other position in the county). We have worked closely with the Board of Supervisors to improve salaries and benefits for this position. We will continue to expand our use of social media and on-line job recruitment sites. We are also committed to increasing our personal visits and recruitment trips to educational institutions and job fairs.

Name or Report: Office of Emergency Services

Recommendation #R-1: “That the Sheriff’s Department OES complete the updating of the EOP.” (F-1).

AGREE, and will be implemented. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is in progress, will be completed and made available to the public in the fall of 2024.

Recommendation R-2: “That the Sheriff’s Department needs to segregate OES Budget Unit 2704, from the remainder of the Sheriff’s Department budget, to include all costs related to OES operations.” (F-2).

DISAGREE (partially), this cannot be completely implemented. 2704 is simply a grant budget that only covers a portion of OES operations. As an example, we have employees who have management responsibilities within OES only during emergencies but work primarily in Patrol (Budget Unit 2201). Most emergencies and EOC (Emergency Operations Center) activations involve multiple county departments, with multiple budget units within their respective departments. I do understand this makes overall costs of OES events difficult to track, but they can be tracked. I would be happy to work with the Grand Jury to answer any specific cost questions they have on future or past events.

Recommendation R-3: “That the Sheriff’s Department take immediate steps to improve public access to the emergency notification system.” (F-5).

AGREE, has been implemented.

The Sheriff’s Department has, and will continue to, explore ways to improve public access to our notification systems. The following are examples of systems and policies in place in the county:

- Lake Co Alerts: Lake County Sheriff’s Office (Unincorporated County): The Lake County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) and OES send emergency alerts via phone call to your landline or cell phone, TTY/TTD, text and/or SMS messages, email and via social media.
- The City of Clearlake and City of Lakeport provide alert and warning within their city limits. Registration and information provided is independent of the Sheriff’s LakeCoAlerts.
- Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)
 - Lake County Sheriff’s Office is an iPaws Alerting Authority and may send emergency alerts that disseminate via the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) or other alerting systems.

- EAS delivers alerts via AM, FM and satellite radio, as well as broadcast, cable and satellite TV.
- Cell phones and mobile devices receive WEA based on location.
- Warning Sirens
 - Some communities purchase and maintain their own community warning sirens. Activation for tests and actual emergencies are conducted by the Sheriff's Office.

While LakeCoAlerts is an “opt in” emergency communication method, OES employs several methods to encourage public opt-in and understanding including:

- Websites:
 - <https://Ready.LakeCountyCA.gov>
 - <https://www.lakesheriff.com>
 - <https://www.lakesheriff.com/about/oes> and all sub-pages
 - <https://www.lakecountyca.gov>
- Social Media
 - Facebook: <https://facebook.com/lakecountyoes>
 - Facebook: <https://facebook.com/lakesheriff>
 - X - https://x.com/i/flow/login?redirect_after_login=%2Flake_sheriff
 - Instagram - [Lake County CA Sheriff \(@lakesheriffca\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)
- Community Events
 - Booths at public events such as the Lake County Fair, Health and Heroes Safety Fair, and more. Sheriff, OES and volunteers sit at booths and help visitors look up their zone and register for LakeCoAlerts.
- Other Outreach *designed to reach multiple people at once vs the individual only as described above.*
 - Information disseminated via Operational Area Emergency Coordinator's group. Usually by e-mail with information about how agencies/departments can share information with their clients/constituents/community served.
 - Presentation to community groups that target a larger audience including:
 - Lakeport Rotary Club – with encouragement to “partner” and share LakeCoAlerts information.
 - Lake County Tourism Improvement District – including ideas to help inform the public such as via newsletters/meetings and outreach to vacation rentals, etc.
 - Lake County Realtors Association – two separate presentations including a small group of realtors and the entire Realtor's Association general meeting. Encouraging awareness/understanding of LakeCoAlerts and ways to share the information including potential realtor specific magnets in newly sold/purchased homes, newsletters and other communication platforms.
 - Outreach to Spanish speaking communities via existing relationships (i.e. EDD) that included LakeCoAlert information and a survey to learn more about methods that information should be disseminated.

Emergency alerts rely on the public's *want* of the information and do not replace the "boots on the ground" approach to evacuations that include Deputies going door to door, using hi-lo sirens and neighbors helping neighbors. The Sheriff's Office is committed to consistency with the emergency alert system and carefully selected the Everbridge platform for LakeCoAlerts. The user has control of their information at all times and can opt in to receive alerts for multiple locations via multiple pathways (email, text, phone call, etc.).

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Howe
Sheriff-Coroner
Emergency Services Director
County of Lake